



What you need to know to fight the flu this flu season

Do you know what to do about the flu? Every year we hear about the flu in the news. But what is the flu? How do you get it? How do you treat it? How do you keep from getting it?

What is the flu? Influenza or “the flu” is an illness that affects our entire body, including the lungs. As many as one in five Americans will get the flu each year. Flu is caused by a virus that spreads from person to person. The illness can be mild, like a bad cold, or it can be very serious. In fact, people can die from the flu.

How do you get the flu? You get the flu from other people. The flu virus spreads through coughing or sneezing. It also spreads by touching a person with the flu or by touching something that person has touched and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

How do you know you have the flu? Sometimes you can have the flu and not know it. Here are some signs that you might have the flu:

- high fever (temperature higher than 98.6 F on a thermometer)
- headache
- fatigue

- dry cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose

Children and some adults may also have:

- upset stomach
- vomiting.

What should you do if you have the flu? There is no instant cure for the flu. But there are things you can do to help you feel better:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink lots of liquids like water, fruit juice and thin soup.
- Avoid drinking alcohol.
- Don't smoke.

You can take Vitamin C. You can also buy flu medicine at the store. Both might make you feel better, but they will not cure the flu.

The best way to not get sick is to **get a flu shot each fall**. You can get a flu shot from your doctor, your local health department or an urgent care center. A flu shot can keep you from getting sick. It also will stop the spread of the flu virus to others.

You can **talk to your doctor about anti-viral medications**. These are prescription drugs that might keep you from getting the flu, but must be taken at the first signs of illness.

There are some **other things you can do to stay well** and not spread the flu virus.

- Stay away from people who are sick.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth.

When should you go to the doctor? Some cases of the flu are serious. If you or someone in your family is very sick, you should call your doctor right away.

The flu is serious if your child has:

- a high fever that won't go away
- trouble breathing
- a bluish color to their skin
- refused fluids
- another medical condition that gets worse, like asthma.

The flu is serious if you have:

- a high fever that won't go away
- trouble breathing
- pain or pressure in your chest
- fainted or feel like fainting
- felt confused.

Prevention is the best medicine. Just because it is flu season doesn't mean you will get sick. Be safe. Be smart. Take steps to stay healthy and avoid the flu.

Instead of aspirin, give a child or teenager an aspirin substitute, such as Tylenol® or Advil®.

Get a flu shot every year. It's inexpensive, and you can get one from your doctor, local health department, or urgent

care center.

Cover your mouth!
Coughing and sneezing
spread the flu.

Are you at high risk of getting the flu?
If you are in one of these categories,
make sure you get a flu shot early:

- age 65 or older
- children ages 6 to 23 months
- children or adults with ongoing health problems
- pregnant
- caregiver for children or elderly persons

***For more information about the flu, or to get a flu shot,
contact your county health department.***